

KREINER MALTING GRAIN ELEVATOR  
(Buffalo Malting Grain Elevator)  
50 Elk Street  
Buffalo  
Erie County  
New York

HAER No NY-258

HAER  
NY  
15-BUF  
36-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Engineering Record  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of The Interior  
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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(Buffalo Malting Grain Elevator)  
HAER No. NY-258

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15-BUF  
36-

Location: 50 Elk St., Buffalo, Erie County, New York

Date: Mainhouse: late 1920s  
Annex: 1936

Builder: Mainhouse: Unknown  
Annex: Monarch Engineering

Designer: Mainhouse: Unknown  
Annex: Monarch Engineering

Status: Derelict

Significance: The grain elevators of Buffalo comprise the most outstanding collection of extant grain elevators in the United States, and collectively represent the variety of construction materials, building forms, and technological innovations that revolutionized the handling of grain in this country.

Project Information: The documentation of Buffalo's grain elevators was prepared by the Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), National Park Service, in 1990 and 1991. The project was co-sponsored by the Industrial Heritage Committee, Inc., of Buffalo, Lorraine Pierro, President, with the cooperation of The Pillsbury Company, Mark Norton, Plant Manager, Walter Dutka, Senior Mechanical Engineer, and with the valuable assistance of Henry Baxter, Henry Wollenberg, and Jerry Malloy. The HAER documentation was prepared under the supervision of Robert Kapsch, Chief, HABS/HAER, and Eric DeLony, Chief and Principal Architect, HAER. The project was managed by Robbyn Jackson, Architect, HAER, and the team consisted of: Craig Strong, Supervising Architect; Todd Croteau, Christopher Payne, Patricia Reese, architects; Thomas Leary, Supervising Historian; John Healey, and Elizabeth Sholes, historians. Large-format photography was done by Jet Lowe, HAER photographer.

Historians: Thomas E. Leary, John R. Healey, Elizabeth C. Sholes, 1990-1991

This is one in a series of HAER reports for the Buffalo Grain Elevator Project. HAER No. NY-239, "Buffalo Grain Elevators," contains an overview history of the elevators. The following elevators have separate reports:

NY-240 Great Northern Elevator  
NY-241 Standard Elevator  
NY-242 Wollenberg Grain & Seed Elevator  
NY-243 Concrete-Central Elevator  
NY-244 Washburn Crosby Elevator  
NY-245 Connecting Terminal Elevator  
NY-246 Spencer Kellogg Elevator  
NY-247 Cooperative Grange League Federation  
NY-248 Electric Elevator  
NY-249 American Elevator  
NY-250 Perot Elevator  
NY-251 Lake & Rail Elevator  
NY-252 Marine "A" Elevator  
NY-253 Superior Elevator  
NY-254 Saskatchewan Cooperative Elevator  
NY-256 Urban Elevator  
NY-257 H-O Oats Elevator  
NY-258 Kreiner Malting Elevator  
NY-259 Meyer Malting Elevator  
NY-260 Eastern States Elevator

In addition, the Appendix of HAER No. NY-239 contains brief notations on the following elevators:

Buffalo Cereal Elevator  
Cloverleaf Milling Co. Elevator  
Dakota Elevator  
Dellwood Elevator  
Great Eastern Elevator  
Iron Elevator  
John Kam Malting Elevator  
Monarch Elevator  
Pratt Foods Elevator  
Ralston Purina Elevator  
Riverside Malting Elevator

The Kriener "A" and "B" elevators served the adjoining malting complex from the Erie and Lockawanna Railroad. The "A" Elevator was built in 1925 by an unknown designer and builder. The elevator, of slip formed reinforced concrete construction, provides 100,000 bushels of storage in five bins. The four main cylindrical bins are in tangential contact and arranged in two rows of two with a central interspace bin between them. The bins are 16'-6" in inner diameter and extend to a height of 90'. The elevator's monolithic concrete workhouse is 145' high and is located over the northeastern part of the structure. A railroad unloading tower adjoins this building.<sup>1</sup>

A second elevator was constructed to the southwest of the original elevator in 1936. It is of rectangular plan, measuring 45' x 40', with one corner cut diagonally to accommodate the existing roadway. This elevator was built by the Monarch Engineering Company to the design of H. R. Wait, and is of slip formed reinforced concrete construction. The elevator provides 180,000 bushels of storage in nine rectangular 14' x 12' bins arranged in three rows of three. The elevator's characteristic flat sides express the internal bin arrangements.

To the northeast of the "A" Elevator is a cleaning house measuring 29' x 17' and rising to a height of 180'. Beyond the cleaning house, the drying kilns are accommodated within a steel-framed concrete-floored building measuring 50' x 28' and 57' high. A wooden malt house measuring 87' x 87' lies to the west of these buildings.

## BUSINESS HISTORY

Kreiner Malting, known formally as Wm. E. Kreiner & Sons, Inc., began as a family business in 1878. The firm was originally named Kreiner & Lehr after the father and grandfather of the twentieth-century owners, William and Howard Kreiner. The company built two malting operations, one on Spring Street, which is no longer extant, and a larger operation at Elk Street and South Park Avenue on Buffalo's south side. The Elk Street grain elevator and malt house still greet passers-by as they make the S-curve on South Park that by-passes the plant.

In 1947 president and founder of the second firm William E. Kreiner died at age ninety. Both he and his son, William, Jr., had incorporated the firm in 1926 to "manufacture, sell, deal...in all grains, malt, and related materials..." and to "operate elevators, malt houses, mills, factories...". The Wm. E. Kreiner firm began its formal existence with \$200,000 in

capital, the vast majority of which was held by the two William Kreiners and a second son, Howard. William, Sr. was prominent within Buffalo's Republican party politics, and, in 1900, was elected to the city council where he served for four years.<sup>2</sup>

At the senior Kreiner's death, control of the malting company was retained by the two brothers. Despite the small size of the firm, William, Jr. was prominent in the promotion of the malting industry nationally, serving as president of the national trade association, the Barley & Malt Institute. He was also a fifty-year member of the Master Brewer Association, evidence that he belonged to a dying breed, the maltster, whose knowledge of the stages of fermentation, time, temperature, and taste, had once been the dominant means of producing specific flavors of malt to customer specifications. The labor-intensive malting process involves a great deal of materials transfer, shoveling and handling of the barley as it germinates and careful sampling and observation of its progress.<sup>3</sup>

Wm. E. Kreiner & Sons was dissolved as a company in 1960 and reorganized as a partnership, Kreiner Malt Co., at about the same time. The brothers continued operating under the new name until William, Jr.'s death in 1968. After that date, Howard carried on alone for three more years until Kreiner finally closed in 1971. Howard died three years later.<sup>4</sup> The property at 50 Elk Street was owned briefly by Buffalo Malting Corporation, incorporated in 1975. Buffalo Malting actually had little to do with Buffalo, since it was based partly in New York City and its President, Otto W. Seidenberg, was from Long Lake, Minnesota. The company held the property for eleven years before the malting facility was sold to IMC Property Corporation and surrounding lands sold to local people and to the New York State Department of Transportation. The facility is now empty and abandoned, and its future remains uncertain.<sup>5</sup>

ENDNOTES

1. The building permit for Elevator "A" could not be located. The Elevator is first listed in the Northwestern Miller's annual report of "Storage Capacity of Grain Elevators at Important Centers" for 1930. All other details are from Sanborn Fire Insurance maps. Additional information on Elevator "B" is from conversations with Mr. Ed Henessey. The capacity is derived from the total capacity of the plant at closure minus the capacity of the cylindrically binned elevator.
2. "The Kreiners: Deans of Buffalo Maltsters," Buffalo Business (November, 1952): 13-14; Buffalo Courier-Express, 16 April 1947, p. 6; Erie County Clerk (ECC), Corporations, Wm. E. Kreiner & Sons, Certificate of Incorporation, January 10, 1926, Box 14835. All Erie County Clerk documents are listed by date of document origin, not by date of filing, unless otherwise noted.
3. Buffalo Courier-Express, 1 February 1968, p. 8.
4. ECC, Corporations, Wm. E. Kreiner & Sons, Certificate of Dissolution, October 7, 1960; Buffalo Evening News, 8 August 1974, p. 46.
5. ECC, Deeds, Liber 8296, July 12, 1975, p. 5; Liber 9586, June 30, 1986, p. 147; Liber 9005, March 14, 1980, p. 694; Corporations, Buffalo Malting, Certificate of Incorporation, June 17, 1975, Box 57738.

SOURCES

Buffalo Courier-Express, 16 April 1947, p. 6; 1 February 1968, 8.

Buffalo Evening News, 8 August 1974, p. 46.

Erie County Clerk, Records, Erie County, NY.

"The Kreiners: Deans of Buffalo Maltsters," Buffalo Business  
(November 1952): 13-14.

Sanborn Fire Insurance maps.

"Storage Capacity of Grain Elevators at Important Centers,"  
Northwestern Miller, Annual Report, 1930.

APPENDIX

Mainhouse

Bins: Capacity 100,000 bushels  
Main bins, 4 (2 x 2) cylindrical, 16'-6" diameter  
in tangential contact, 90' high  
Interspace bin between the 4 main bins

Workhouse: Monolithic concrete, 145' high

REFERENCES: The original building permit could not be found. The elevator first appears in the Northwestern Miller's annual tabulation of "Storage Capacity of Grain Elevators at Important Centers" in 1930. All other details are taken from Sanborn Fire Insurance maps.

Annex

Bins: Capacity 180,000 bushels  
Building 40' x 45' with one corner cut at a  
diagonal; external flat walls; internal  
arrangements unknown

REFERENCES: The capacity is derived from recent total capacity figures minus the capacity of the original concrete elevator. Other information is taken from Sanborn Fire Insurance maps.